

LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Henry J. Mroz Central Administration Offices
155 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01852

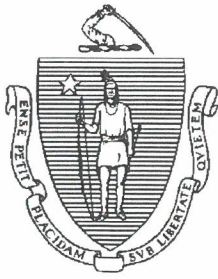
Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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To: Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools
From: Dr. James Hall, Chief Operating Officer
Date: February 10, 2022
Re: Consideration Of DESE 9FEB22 Communication & 10FEB22 City Of Lowell
Health Officials' Recommendations

I have attached DESE's February 9, 2022 memorandum entitled "Update on DESE Mask Requirement" and the Health Department's February 10, 2022 memorandum entitled "Mask Requirement" for the committee's consideration.

The Health Department also stated that schools could open some water bubblers in high visibility areas to be used as "water filling stations" only. They recommended that each bubbler be clearly marked with signage that it is to be used only as a filling station.



Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
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MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Assistant Superintendents, Collaborative Leaders, and Leaders of Approved Special Education Schools
From: Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner
Date: February 9, 2022
Subject: Update on DESE Mask Requirement

After consulting with medical experts and state health officials, the Commissioner will not renew the state mask requirement after it expires on February 28, 2022. Effective Monday, February 28, the DESE mask requirement will be lifted statewide. The Commonwealth's high vaccination rates and widespread availability of COVID-19 testing for school personnel and students support this decision.

Masking continues to be required on all school buses, per federal order.

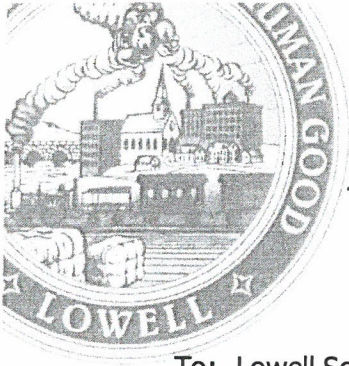
DESE and DPH strongly recommend students and staff continue to follow the DESE-DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios.

As always, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice. DESE and DPH strongly recommend unvaccinated individuals should continue to wear masks in school settings.

The Commissioner will continue to monitor public health data, consult with medical experts and state health officials, and issue further guidance and/or requirements as needed.

More than 40 schools have already received approval from DESE to remove the mask requirement. With the removal of the statewide mask requirement, additional schools no longer need to apply.

DESE continues to recommend that districts and schools adopt a layered approach to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in school settings. DESE and DPH continue to strongly urge all eligible individuals to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and booster and continue to support schools with vaccination clinics. Other mitigations include participating in the statewide COVID-19 testing program, maintaining good hand hygiene practices, and staying home when sick.



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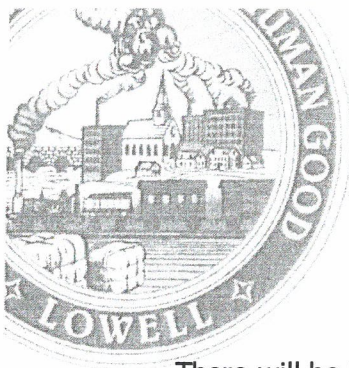
Lisa Golden, RN, MSN
Director of Health & Human Services
978.674.1050

To: Lowell School Committee
From: Lisa Golden, RN, BSN, MSN, Director HHS
Beth Moffett, RN, BSN, NCSN, School Nurse Leader
Date: February 10, 2022
Re: Mask Requirement

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will not renew the mask requirement after it expires on February 28, 2022. Effective Monday, February 28, the DESE mask requirement will be lifted in schools statewide. The Lowell Health Department and the Lowell Board of Health support the new mask recommendation in Lowell Public Schools. Masking will still be required on school buses and will still be required in some places like the nurses office.

Data shows that there is minimal transmission in schools and we have testing guidelines in place including at home testing and symptomatic testing in the nurse's office. We will be continuing to follow DESE-DPH Protocols for Responding to Covid-19 Scenarios in our schools.

As always, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from covid-19, should be supported in that choice. We will continue to work with the School Department to monitor public health data and issue further guidance and/or recommendation as needed. The School Department has a variety of vaccine clinics set up after school and there is a clinic run at Old Ferry Rd 5 days a week Tuesday-Saturday. Vaccination continues to be the best protection against Covid 19 along with good handwashing.



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Lisa Golden, RN, MSN
Director of Health & Human Services
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There will be long term issues related to the impact of Covid and masking on learning and mental health. In 2020 ED visits of 5-11 year olds were up 25% for mental health and it is thought to be due to response of the pandemic. Masking in class is affecting some of our most vulnerable students who have special needs, autism, ELL and social/emotional needs. They need to be able to recognize facial expressions as part of ongoing development.

The covid numbers for the week of 2/7 are 100 for 3 days, 2/8 42, 2/9 44, and 2/10 33.

Below is a list of symptoms for which parents should monitor their children.

Children must remain home if they have any of the following:

1. A contagious illness like strep throat, until the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
2. A rash or skin condition not diagnosed by a doctor.
3. Temperature over 100.0° within the past 24 hours.
4. Vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours.
5. Red or Pink eyes or drainage from eyes. (Do not bring your child to school until the day after treatment begins)
6. Head lice.
7. Have been notified by the school nurse/health department that immunizations are not up to date. (exclusion notice is given after the 3rd warning)